

Sexual Violence and Misconduct Policy Updates

President Ronald D. Liebowitz sent the following statement to the Middlebury community on September 8, 2014.

Dear Students, Faculty and Staff,

I hope the early part of the new academic year has gotten off to a good start on the west coast, and will do likewise here in Vermont beginning today.

As many of you have read, the subject of sexual violence and misconduct on campuses has been a topic of much discussion in recent months—among students, parents, faculty, staff, the media, and state and federal government. It also has been the focus of attention here at Middlebury. I am writing to inform you of some important changes we have made over the summer to further strengthen our policies and practices and to ensure our compliance with emerging federal regulations and recommendations.

In June, we informed students, faculty and staff that our Sexual Misconduct Policy had been expanded to cover a range of infractions. It is now the Policy Against Sexual Misconduct, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, and Stalking. Today, we are announcing an additional update to this policy. Effective immediately, Middlebury's Human Relations Officer (HRO) will adjudicate all alleged violations. We will no longer refer cases to the Sexual Misconduct Review Panel (SMRP). While the students, faculty members, and staff members who served on the SMRP in the three years of its existence have done excellent work, we believe our institutional goals and the meeting of evolving standards of compliance will be best served by the new process, which places the adjudication responsibility in the hands of full-time professionals with extensive and ongoing training and experience in this area.

This change will help to ensure that reviews of all complaints of sexual misconduct, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking continue to meet the highest standards of professionalism. Furthermore, because this policy applies to all Middlebury students, faculty, and staff, including those in our Language Schools, Schools Abroad, the Monterey Institute of International Studies, the Bread Loaf School of English, and the multiple other programs Middlebury offers throughout the year and around the globe, the process of adjudicating cases will be made consistent throughout the year regardless of location.

The initial steps in the investigation and adjudication process will remain the same. Complaints of violations of this policy will continue to be investigated by a trained investigator. The investigator's report now will be submitted to Middlebury's HRO. The HRO will determine if the policies under investigation were violated and, if so, will refer the matter to the appropriate senior administrator for the determination of a sanction. An appeal process remains in place for students.

This academic year, we will emphasize prevention strategies and programs to educate students, faculty, and staff with the goal of preventing sexual violence of all kinds. At the core of our efforts are two fundamental principles: violence will not be tolerated at Middlebury, and each of us must do our part to prevent it.

If at any time you or someone you know has been affected by sexual misconduct, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking, I encourage you to seek care and support (including confidential resources) and to review information about filing a complaint. If you have questions related to resources or the new policy changes, you may contact Associate Dean for Judicial Affairs and Student Life Karen Guttentag (kguttent@middlebury.edu) at Middlebury or Assistant Dean of Student Services Ashley Arrocha (aarrocha@miis.edu) at Monterey.

Sincerely,

Ron

Office of the President

Old Chapel
9 Old Chapel Road
Middlebury College
Middlebury, VT 05753
802.443.5400
president@middlebury.edu